



# Business brewing in Taos

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With revenue growing by more than 50 percent in 2018, and a large new contract signed, Taos-based tea company [tea.o.graphy](http://tea.o.graphy) is flourishing, and owner Dana Blair is grateful for the help she's received from the New Mexico business community.

"Taos has as entrepreneurial spirit and appreciation for small businesses that's been great," she says. "We've received a lot of support from other businesses."

With 60 clients for her range of tea blends throughout Taos and beyond (mainly restaurants, hotels and cafés), it's clear there's a market for her innovative use of ingredients.

"I came to tea through coffee," explains Blair, "and we've created some unique blends that are robust and appeal to tea drinkers and coffee drinkers. We also push the envelope in some of the ingredients we use in our blends, for example using red chile in our Sandia Rose blend."

As well as support from the local business community, Blair also identifies the help of business development organizations including the Regional Development Corporation (RDC), Taos Entrepreneurial Network, UNM/Taos SBDC and Taos County Economic Development Corporation as integral to her success.

"The RDC have been amazing. I tell all the entrepreneurs I meet to contact them, because the level of support and help you receive is fantastic," she says.

"It really helps you lift your head from the day-to-day and start asking some hard but necessary questions. It helps you focus on working on the business, not in the business."

Although 80 percent of its sales are wholesale, tea.o.graphy also has a small storefront off Kit Carson Road that also doubles as a production space so visitors can see how the blends are prepared.

Founded in 2014, the business currently employs seven people, and Blair finds being able to create jobs in the community very rewarding. "We could look for investment to purchase a machine to automate the bagging, for example. But that would strip away the handcrafted nature of the teas – that there are real people working on the product."

The business has been growing without loans or debt, and future plans include exploring private label options while keeping the focus on the niche markets in high-end hotels, spas, cafés and natural grocers.

"Before I started a business I used to travel all the time, and giving that up was one of the things I was unsure about," says Blair. "But as a business owner the landscape is

always changing even though you're in the same place. That really surprised me, and satisfied that itch to explore. As an entrepreneur, you're always exploring."

It seems that Taos is a good base for that exploration.

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